MASS. UM101.302:C37

The John W. McCormack Institute of Public Affairs

UMASS/AMHERST
312066 0277 6986 1

GOVERMENT DOCUMENTS
COLLECTION

APR 8 2003

University of Massachusetts
Depository Copy

Characteristics of Homeless Individuals Accessing Massachusetts Emergency Shelters 1999-2001

By: Tatjana Meschede, Michelle Kahan, Michelle Hayes, Donna Haig Friedman
With: CSPTech Staff: David Canavan, Michael Faris, Susan Ma, Philip Mugo, Jennifer Raymond, Bill Silvestri, Brian Sokol, Nancy Sullivan, Jason Wilson

Center for Social Policy
McCormack Institute of Public Affairs
University of Massachusetts Boston

January 2003

The McCormack Institute

The John W. McCormack Institute of Public Affairs is a multi-purpose public policy research institute, established in 1983 at the University of Massachusetts Boston and named in honor of the late John W. McCormack, former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives.

The Institute's components include four centers, each with its own area of focus: the Center for State and Local Policy, the Center for Social Policy, the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy, and the Center for Democracy and Development. The Institute also administers UMass Boston's M.S. Program in Public Affairs and publishes *The New England Journal of Public Policy.*

The McCormack Institute's fellows and staff—who are drawn from such diverse fields as journalism, politics and government, and the social sciences—represent vital connections between the University community and centers of power and innovation in the private and public sectors. They are involved in university teaching, survey research, educational outreach projects, and a variety of publications including books, academic papers, and newspaper columns; they also appear regularly as guest speakers, moderators, and panelists on TV and radio.

Through the work of these distinguished academics and practitioners, the Institute seeks to contribute to informed public discourse and to play a constructive role in public policy formulation and problem-solving.

The views contained in this paper are those of the author(s) and not the John W. McCormack Institute of Public Affairs.

Characteristics of Homeless Individuals Accessing Massachusetts Emergency Shelters 1999-2001

Publication of:
CSPTech (Connection, Service, and Partnership) through Technology Project Center for Social Policy, McCormack Institute University of Massachusetts, Boston

By: Tatjana Meschede, Michelle Kahan, Michelle Hayes, Donna Haig Friedman
With: CSPTech Staff: David Canavan, Michael Faris, Susan Ma, Philip Mugo, Jennifer Raymond, Bill Silvestri, Brian Sokol, Nancy Sullivan, Jason Wilson

January 2003

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015

https://archive.org/details/characteristicso00mesc

Introduction

The Center for Social Policy (CSP) at the McCormack Institute, University of Massachusetts Boston oversees the Connection, Service, and Partnership through Technology (CSPTech) project.[1] CSPTech operates a homeless management information system being implemented throughout the Commonwealth. Founded in 1995, this project is a networked computerized record-keeping system that allows homeless service providers across Massachusetts to collect uniform client information over time. This information is aggregated in a database used by service providers, advocates, government officials, researchers, and people experiencing homelessness. Analysis of this information is critical to efforts to understand the extent of this problem in Massachusetts in an attempt to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty.

Through multi-year contracts with the City of Boston and the State of Massachusetts, more than 110 homeless programs serving individuals are currently involved in the CSPTech project, representing over 60% of the homeless individuals served in emergency shelter in the state. These data represent the result of an intensive, cooperative effort over the past several years of service providers throughout the state of Massachusetts. Through the period of transition of the CSPTech project from use of an older access-based system to a new web-based information system, CSPTech staff, service providers, and consumers felt the effects of a shift in culture with the implementation of a new Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) in Massachusetts.

Representativeness

The data contained in this report represent 62% (N=11,173[2]) of those persons served in the Commonwealth's individual emergency shelter programs during 2001[3]. With the implementation of the new web-based information system several of the larger emergency shelter providers chose to use a random sampling system during this calendar year, thus obtaining detailed information from one out of every 100 guests on a nightly basis. Data obtained utilizing this method were weighted appropriately.

Based upon policies developed by the project's Steering Committee, aggregate data must meet a minimum threshold criterion before they can be released; data must represent at least 60% of those persons served in a region. Based on a calculation of client records contained in the database versus system capacity for a particular period, the data are deemed eligible for release.

The report also provides comparisons to data gathered in 1999 and 2000. It should be noted that with the 2001 conversion to a new web-based system some questions and response categories differ from the old system to the new. Thus, for some variables comparisons are not available.

---

[1] This project was previously referred to as the ANCHoR Project.

[2] Please note the total number of records includes a weighted random sample from the three shelters operated by the Boston Public Health Commission

[3] See appendix A for complete list of participating agencies.

Data Quality
Even though 2001 was a transition year to a new web-based data collection tool, overall data quality improved over that in prior years. For example, in 2001 income assessments were provided for 64 percent of the total sample as compared to 16 percent in 2000 and 22 percent in 1999.

Limitations
These data were collected in large part by interviewing people experiencing homelessness, sometimes on the street, and most often in shelters or other homeless service agencies. These data do not capture information on people who are in doubled-up living situations, and others who are homeless but do not come into contact with the service system.

In the trend analyses, the numbers of respondents in the various categories are often quite different. For example, the number of respondents in 2001 for education and prior living are almost double the number of respondents in 2000 and 1999. While these comparisons provide noteworthy information, the variations in response proportions should be taken into account when making generalizations about the data that follow. The results, can, however, still provide some indication of the differences between the various homeless populations across the two years.

Data from individuals who were interviewed as part of the random sampling strategy employed by the Boston Public Health Commission's three emergency shelter programs were weighted in the final aggregate database. Due to the random sampling process, we are not able to calculate an unduplicated count for portions of the data.

Report Structure
The report begins by focusing on the demographic characteristics of those accessing the individual emergency shelters in 2001. Where possible, these data are compared to those findings for individuals served in 2000 and 1999. The report then compares members of the individual shelter population by gender and age group. Finally, individuals served in 2001 are analyzed by region, contrasting those from Boston with others from the rest of the state. In addition, the characteristics of individuals served in Boston during 2001 are compared to their counterparts in 2000 and 1999.

Acknowledgement
We thank the thousands of homeless people who shared their personal information, as well as the hundreds of staff who have conducted interviews, entered data, and managed the project. We also thank the members of the CSPTech team who continue to labor long and hard with each of the program sites.

Comparative Highlights: Individuals in Emergency Shelter 2001 and comparisons to those served in 2000 and 1999

Demographic Characteristics (p.4)

- In 2001, more homeless individuals identified themselves as African American or Latino, and fewer as White.
- In 2001, more homeless individuals reported having attained a high school diploma or GED than those in prior years.
- There were no noteworthy changes in gender, age, marital status, and veteran status from previous years.

Living Situation Prior to Shelter Entry (p.5)

- In 2001, individual shelter users were much more likely to have stayed outdoors the night prior to shelter entry than those in prior years. In addition, fewer reported having stayed with friends or family and rented their own home prior to shelter entry. These changes, however, may be due to the shift in data collection tools rather than indicating real changes in this population's living situations prior to shelter entry.
- Between two to four percent of individual shelter users were released from jail or prison to a homeless shelter over the three years covered in this report.
- The proportion of homeless shelter users released from a substance abuse treatment facility consistently decreased over the three years covered in this report.

Health Insurance Coverage (p.5)

- Except for a slight increase in Medicaid coverage and a slight decrease in private coverage, there were no notable changes in health insurance coverage for homeless individuals in 2001 compared to their counterparts in prior years.

Special Needs Assessment (p.5)

- Thirty-eight percent of all individuals in emergency shelter reported at least one kind of special need. Of those reporting at least one kind of special need, half reported an alcohol problem, one-fifth a mental health, another one-fifth a drug problem, a little less than one-fifth medical problems, and fewer than 5% other problems.

Income Assessments (p.6)

- Of those reporting income in 2001, more than two-fifths reported earnings from employment averaging slightly over $1100 per month.
- From 2000 to 2001, notably fewer individuals accessed SS, SSI and/or SSDI income, and notably more had access to Food Stamps.
- Income amounts increased slightly in 2001 for almost all income sources.

Table 1:
Demographic Characteristics of Homeless Individuals

	2001 (N=11,173)	2000 (N=10,219)	1999 (N=8,411)
Gender	(N= 10,724)	(N=10,207)	(N=8,381)
Male	79%	81%	78%
Female	21%	19%	22%
Race	(N= 9,341)	(N=9,144)	(N=6,175)
White	52%	60%	55%
African American	28%	25%	28%
Latino	14%	10%	12%
Other	4%	3%	3%
Multiracial	NA	1%	1%
Native American	1%	1%	1%
Asian	1%	1%	<1%
Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%	<1%
Alaskan Native	<1%	<1%	0%
Age	(N=9,618)	(N=10,207)	(N=8,390)
Under 18	<1%	<1%	<1%
18-24	10%	10%	11%
25-34	19%	21%	24%
35-44	33%	36%	36%
45-54	26%	24%	20%
55-64	9%	7%	6%
65 and older	2%	2%	2%
Average Age	41	41**	39**
Education	(N=4,734)	(N=2,751)	(N=2,287)
Grade school	5%	8%	15%
Some high-school	23%	28%	29%
HS grad./GED	46%	38%	36%
Some college/AA	18%	20%	14%
BS/BA	8%	5%	4%
Grad. Degree	0%	1%	2%
Marital Status	(N= 8,580)	(N=8,297)	(N=6,055)
Single/Never Married	60%	60%	63%
Divorced	21%	22%	20%
Separated	9%	9%	9%
Married/Partnered	7%	7%	7%
Widowed	2%	2%	2%
Veterans	(N= 11,173)	(N=10,219)	(N=8,411)
Yes	18%	21%	15%

** Statistically significant difference, p<.001

Table 2:
Residence of Homeless Individuals Prior to Entering Shelter

Prior Residence	2001 (N=4,348)	2000 (N=2,384)	1999 (N=2,550)
Other Shelter	34%	26%	36%
Homes of Relative/Friends	7%	21%	14%
Rented Home	12%	20%	16%
Detox/Substance Abuse Treatment Ctr	6%	9%	14%
Street/Park/Car/Abandoned Building	21%	5%	4%
Owned Home	2%	5%	2%
Jail/Prison/Detention Center	2%	4%	2%
Supervised Living[a]	2%	3%	3%
Mental Health/Other Hospital	1%	2%	3%
Other	11%	2%	2%
Boarding House (A)	NA	2%	2%
Hotel/Motel (A)	NA	1%	1%
Transitional Housing	3%	1%	1%

[a] Foster home, halfway house, or nursing home.
(A) = Information was only provided in the old ANCHoR system.

Table 3:
Health Insurance Coverage of Homeless Individuals

Health Insurance	2001 (N=3,958)	2000 (N=2,337)	1999 (N=1,532)
No Health Insurance	31%	32%	30%
Medicaid/Mass Health	61%	55%	56%
Private Plan	3%	6%	6%
Medicare	3%	4%	4%
VA	2%	2%	2%
HMO	1%	2%	2%

Table 4:
Special Needs Assessments of Homeless Individuals

Number of Special Needs	% of records indicating needs (N=4,267)	% of total (N=11,173)
One Special Need	79%	30%
Two Special Needs	14%	5%
Three or More Special Needs	7%	3%
Type of Special Needs *		
Alcohol	53%	20%
Mental Health	21%	8%
Drugs	20%	8%
Medical	17%	7%
PTSD	3%	1%
Hearing, Visual, Speech	3%	1%
Cognitive, Developmental, Learning	3%	1%
HIV/AIDS	1%	<1%

* More than 1 response possible

Table 5:
Income by Category of Homeless Individuals[4]

Income Category	2001 (N=11,173)	
Employment[a]	25%	
Public Assistance[b]	25%	**Data cannot be compared to previous years as data were collected in different formats**
Employment and Public Assistance	1%	
Income not reported	48%	
Other[c]	1%	

[a]Wages,
[b]TANF, Food Stamps, SS/SSI/SSDI, unemployment
[c]Child support/alimony, retirement, veterans pension

Table 6:
Income Sources and Amounts of Homeless Individuals with Reported Income at Shelter Entry

Income	2001 (N=7,168)	2000 (N=1,642)	1999 (N=1,818)
Income Source[a]			
SS/SSI/SSDI	31%	45%	46%
Employment Income	41%	43%	48%
Other Public Benefits[b]	7%	10%	12%
Food Stamps	11%	7%	10%
TAFDC	2%	2%	2%
Other Private Income[c]	2%	2%	3%
Average Monthly Amount			
SS/SSI/SSDI	$588	$576	$563
Employment Income	$1,115	$1,012	$962
Other Public Benefits[b]	$508	$388	$332
Food Stamps	$148	$113	$99
TAFDC	$442	$366	$343
Other Private Income[c]	$427	$514	$498

[a]More than one response possible.
[b]Earned Income Tax Credit (A), refugee assistance (A), veterans administration disability (A), veterans pension, workers' compensation (A), unemployment, general assistance, rent supplements (A), WIC (A), and alimony/child support.
[c]Retirement, investments (A), savings (A), private disability insurance (A), and other pension (A).

(A) = Information was only provided in the old ANCHoR system.

[4] For the analysis in Table 5, each individual providing income information was grouped into one of five income categories. As such, those with multiple sources were counted only once, as compared to Table 6, where more than one income source was reported.

Comparative Highlights: Homeless Men and Women in Emergency Shelter 2001 and comparisons to those served in 2000 and 1999

Demographic Characteristics (p.8)

- More homeless men in 2001 identified themselves as African American or Latino compared to 2000.
- Homeless men continue to be statistically significantly older than homeless women.
- The overall increase in high school graduation was evenly distributed among homeless men and women.
- Overall, there were no changes in marital status and veteran status compared to previous years.

Living Situation Prior to Shelter Entry (p.9)

- The overall increase in reporting another shelter or the streets as the place of residence prior to shelter entry and the decrease in having rented a home prior to shelter entry in 2001 as compared to 2000 are mostly accounted for by homeless men.
- Fewer homeless men and homeless women reported staying with family and/or friends prior to shelter entry compared to prior years.

Health Insurance Coverage (p.9)

- As in the prior years, more homeless women than men reported Medicaid/MassHealth coverage in 2001.

Special Needs Assessment (p.9)

- More homeless men reported alcohol and/or drug problems than homeless women, and homeless women reported mental health problems to a greater degree than homeless men.

Income Assessments (p.10)

- Of those reporting income in 2001, men were more likely to be employed than women, while women were more likely to receive SS/SSI/SSDI or food stamps.
- Homeless men received statistically significant more income from SS/SSI/SSDI and employment than homeless women.
- Homeless women received statistically significant more income from other public benefits than homeless men.

Table7:
Demographic Characteristics of Individual Homeless Men and Women

	Men 2001 (N=8,491)	Women 2001 (N=2,243)	Men 2000 (N=7,234)	Women 2000 (N=1,898)	Men 1999 (N=5,270)	Women 1999 (N=1,649)
Race	(N=7,332)	(N=2,243)	(N=5,270)	(N=1,649)	(N=7,332)	(N=2,243)
White	52%	52%	61%	56%	56%	54%
African American	28%	29%	24%	29%	25%	30%
Latino	15%	12%	11%	8%	15%	11%
Other	4%	5%	3%	4%	3%	3%
Native American	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Multiracial	NA	NA	<1%	1%	<1%	1%
Asian	1%	1%	<1%	1%	<1%	1%
Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%	<1%
Alaskan Native	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	0%	0%
Age	(N=7,584)	(N=1,964)	(N=8,222)	(N=1,969)	(N=6,496)	(N=1,866)
Under 18	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
18-24	8%	16%	9%	15%	10%	17%
25-34	19%	21%	21%	22%	24%	24%
35-44	33%	32%	36%	33%	37%	33%
45-54	28%	20%	25%	20%	21%	18%
55-64	9%	7%	7%	7%	7%	5%
65 and older	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%	3%
Average Age	42**	39**	41**	39**	40	39
Education	(N=3,746)	(N=946)	(N=1,758)	(N=984)	(N=1,516)	(N=769)
Grade school	6%	1%	8%	8%	14%	12%
Some high-school	22%	29%	28%	27%	30%	30%
HS grad./GED	47%	40%	40%	35%	39%	34%
Some college/AA	18%	20%	19%	23%	13%	18%
BS/BA	8%	11%	4%	6%	4%	4%
Grad. Degree	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Marital Status	(N=6,735	(N=1,779)	(N=6,561)	(N=1,721)	(N=4,593)	(N=1,424)
Single/Never Married	60%	62%	59%	62%	63%	62%
Divorced	22%	18%	23%	19%	21%	16%
Separated	9%	9%	9%	7%	9%	9%
Married/Partnered	7%	8%	7%	9%	6%	9%
Widowed	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%	4%
Veterans	(N=8,491)	(N=2,243)	(N=8,233)	(N=1,970)	(N=6,505)	(N=1,873)
Yes	23%	3%	25%	2%	19%	2%

** Statistically significant difference p<.001

Table 8:
Residence of Homeless Men and Women Prior to Entering Shelter

Prior Residence	Men 2001 (N= 3,275)	Women 2001 (N=1,058)	Men 2000 (N=1,490)	Women 2000 (N=890)	Men 1999 (N=1,860)	Women 1999 (N=863)
Other Shelter	37%	26%	25%	27%	41%	27%
Rented Home	10%	17%	22%	17%	16%	15%
Homes of Friends or Relatives	5%	12%	15%	30%	10%	22%
Detox./Substance Abuse Treatment Center	6%	7%	11%	4%	16%	13%
Owned Home	1%	3%	6%	2%	2%	1%
Jail/Prison/Detention Center	2%	1%	6%	2%	3%	1%
Street/Park/Car/Abandoned Building	24%	9%	3%	7%	3%	7%
Supervised Living[a]	3%	1%	3%	3%	2%	3%
Boarding House	0%	0%	3%	2%	2%	1%
Mental Health/Other Hospital	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%
Other	9%	20%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Hotel/Motel	0%	0%	1%	3%	<1%	2%
Transitional Housing	3%	3%	1%	<1%	1%	<1%

[a]Foster home, halfway house, or nursing home.

Table 9:
Health Insurance Coverage of Homeless Men and Women

Health Insurance	Men 2001 (N=3,275)	Women 2001 (N=1,058)	Men 2000 (N=1,500)	Women 2000 (N=837)	Men 1999 (N=918)	Women 1999 (N=613)
No Health Insurance	34%	21%	37%	22%	31%	22%
Medicaid/Mass Health	57%	70%	49%	65%	52%	62%
Private Plan	3%	4%	6%	6%	6%	6%
Medicare	3%	3%	3%	5%	6%	7%
VA	2%	0%	4%	<1%	4%	<1%
HMO	1%	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%

Table 10: Special Needs Assessments of Homeless Men and Women	% of records with special needs		% of total sample	
	Men 2001	Women 2001	Men 2001	Women 2001
Number of Special Needs	(N=3,293)	(N=1003)	(N=8,491)	(N=2,243)
One Special Need	77%	86%	30%	38%
Two Special Needs	15%	12%	6%	5%
Three or More Special Needs	8%	2%	8%	1%
Type of Special Needs *				
Alcohol	59%	33%	23%	15%
Mental Health	18%	30%	7%	13%
Drugs	23%	11%	9%	5%
Medical	17%	16%	7%	7%
PTSD	3%	1%	1%	<1%
Hearing, Visual, Speech	5%	4%	2%	2%
Cognitive, Developmental, Learning, Alzheimers	3%	5%	1%	2%
HIV/AIDS	1%	1%	<1%	1%

* More than 1 response possible

Table 11:
Income by Category of Homeless Men and Women at Shelter Entry

Income Category	Men 2001 (N=8,491)	Women 2001 (N=2,243)
Employment[a]	27%	21%
Public Assistance[b]	23%	35%
Employ & Public Assistance	1%	1%
Income not reported	48%	42%
Other[c]	1%	1%

Data cannot be compared to previous years as data were collected in different formats

[a]Wages,
[b]TANF, Food Stamps, SSI/SSDI, unemployment
[c]Child support/alimony, retirement, veterans pension

Table 12:
Income Sources and Amounts of Homeless Men and Women with Reported Income at Shelter Entry

Income	Men 2001 (N=4,900)	Women 2001 (N=1,462)	Men 2000 (N=1,008)	Women 2000 (N=633)	Men 1999 (N=1,257)	Women 1999 (N=560)
Income Source[a]						
SS/SSI/SSDI	33%	41%	38%	57%	40%	59%
Employment Income	49%	34%	53%	27%	56%	31%
Other Public Benefits[b]	8%	8%	10%	10%	12%	12%
Food Stamps	11%	20%	5%	11%	7%	15%
Other Private Income[c]	2%	<1%	2%	1%	<1%	6%
TAFDC	1%	5%	<1%	5%	3%	3%
Average Monthly Amount						
SS/SSI/SSDI	$596*	$567*	$585	$565	$578	$536
Employment Income	$1,123*	$1,039*	$1,085**	$762**	$1,018	$709
Other Public Benefits[b]	$390**	$550**	$411	$335	$43	$295
Food Stamps	$148 ns	$149 ns	$116	$109	$92	$108
Other Private Income[c]	$426 ns	$430 ns	$535	$445	$305	$346
TAFDC	$466 ns	$423 ns	$133	$385	$434	$652

[a]More than one response possible.
[b]Earned Income Tax Credit (A), refugee assistance (A), veterans administration disability (A), veterans pension, workers' compensation (A), unemployment, general assistance, rent supplements (A), WIC (A), and alimony/child support.
[c]Retirement, investments (A), savings (A), private disability insurance (A), and other pension (A).
(A)= Information was only provided in the old ANCHoR system.

* Statistically significant difference between men and women p<.01
** Statistically significant difference between men and women p<.001
ns: Statistically non significant

Comparative Highlights: Homeless Youth, Adults, and Elderly in Emergency Shelter 2001 and comparisons to those served in 2000 and 1999

For this set of comparisons, the data were divided by age category:

- Youth – ages 18-24,
- Adults – ages 25-54, and
- Elderly – 55 and over.

Demographic Characteristics (p.12)

- The overall changes of African Americans and Latinos among homeless individuals in emergency shelter in 2001 when compared to 2000 were evenly distributed among the different age groups, as were the changes in educational status.
- There were no major changes in gender, marital and veteran status from the prior years.

Living Situation Prior to Shelter Entry (p.13)

- The overall decrease in renting prior to shelter entry in 2001 was mostly accounted by homeless adults and homeless elderly.
- In 2001, the proportion of individuals entering their current shelter coming from a different emergency shelter increased most dramatically for homeless youth, whereas the proportion of individuals doubling up with relatives and/or friends decreased most dramatically for homeless youth.
- Release from substance abuse treatment facilities slightly increased for youth while it decreased for adults and elderly.
- As in 2000, proportionately fewer homeless youth in 2001 stayed in the streets prior to shelter entry when compared to the other two age groups.

Health Insurance Coverage (p.13)

- Medicaid/Mass Health coverage increased for all three age groups in 2001.

Special Needs Assessment (p.14)

- More homeless youth reported only one special need when compared to the other two age groups.
- Alcohol problems were lowest for homeless youth when compared to the other two age groups.
- As expected, the proportion of homeless individuals with a medical problem increased with age.

Income Assessments (p.14 and p.15)

- Of those reporting income in 2001, more adults and youth were working then their elder counterparts. Those over 55 were more likely to report income from SS/SSI/SSDI and other public benefits.
- Homeless elders reported use of food stamps to a lesser degree than the other two age groups.

Table 13:
Demographic Characteristics of Homeless Youth, Adults, and Elders

	Youth 2001	Adults 2001	Elderly 2001	Youth 2000	Adults 2000	Elderly 2000	Youth 1999	Adults 1999	Elderly 1999
Gender	(N=959)	(N=7,596)	(N=1,061)	(N=1,017)	(N=8,217)	(N=955)	(N=939)	(N=6,703)	(N=703)
Male	66%	81%	82%	71%	82%	80%	66%	79%	80%
Female	34%	19%	18%	29%	18%	20%	34%	21%	20%
Race	(N=837)	(N=7,156)	(N=875)	(N=865)	(N=7,402)	(N=866)	(N=850)	(N=6,133)	(N=689)
White	46%	53%	65%	54%	59%	69%	52%	55%	68%
African American	25%	29%	22%	22%	26%	20%	23%	27%	18%
Latino	19%	12%	10%	15%	10%	7%	18%	13%	11%
Other	8%	4%	2%	6%	3%	2%	5%	3%	2%
Multiracial	NA	NA	NA	1%	1%	<1%	2%	1%	1%
Native American	1%	1%	<1%	1%	1%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%
Asian	1%	1%	<1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	<1%	<1%
Alaskan Native	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	0%	0%
Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%	0%	<1%	<1%
Education	(N=386	(N=3,719)	(N=499)	(N=315)	(N=2,217)	(N=217)	(N=273)	(N=1,817)	(N=192)
Grade school	1%	5%	8%	4%	8%	17%	11%	13%	22%
Some HS	44%	22%	16%	48%	26%	22%	48%	27%	25%
HS grad./GED	42%	47%	46%	34%	39%	34%	34%	39%	31%
Some coll/AA	12%	19%	16%	11%	22%	18%	7%	16%	15%
BS/BA	2%	8%	14%	3%	5%	6%	<1%	4%	6%
Grad. Degree	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	4%	<1%	2%	2%
Marital Status	(N=785)	(N=6,644)	(N=828)	(N=791)	(N=6,705)	(N=793)	(N=659)	(N=4,846)	(N=502)
Single/Never Marr	93%	59%	34%	94%	59%	33%	95%	61%	39%
Married/Partnered	4%	8%	8%	3%	8%	7%	3%	7%	7%
Separated	2%	10%	11%	2%	10%	10%	2%	10%	9%
Divorced	1%	22%	38%	1%	23%	41%	<1%	21%	35%
Widowed	<1%	2%	10%	0%	2%	8%	0%	2%	9%
Veterans	(N=959)	(N=7,596)	(N=1,061)	(N=1,020)	(N=8,229)	(N=956)	(N=943)	(N=6,728)	(N=704)
Yes	2%	21%	38%	3%	21%	36%	2%	15%	31%

Table 14:
Residence of Homeless Youth, Adults, and Elders Prior to Entering Shelter

Prior Residence	Youth 2001 (N=365)	Adults 2001 (N=3,483)	Elderly 2001 (N=414)	Youth 2000 (N=262)	Adults 2000 (N=1,906)	Elderly 2000 (N=215)	Youth 1999 (N=287)	Adults 1999 (N=2,045)	Elderly 1999 (N=209)
Homes of Relative/Friends	14%	6%	7%	43%	18%	16%	29%	13%	11%
Other Shelter	37%	34%	36%	20%	26%	30%	27%	37%	46%
Rented Home	13%	12%	12%	12%	21%	28%	12%	17%	21%
Supervised Living[a]	1%	2%	4%	6%	3%	1%	3%	2%	3%
Detox./Substance Abuse Treatment Center	6%	7%	2%	4%	10%	3%	10%	17%	3%
Owned Home	1%	2%	2%	3%	5%	6%	2%	2%	1%
Jail/Prison/Detention Center	1%	2%	<1%	3%	5%	1%	3%	2%	<1%
Street/Park/Car	11%	21%	26%	2%	5%	5%	6%	4%	3%
Mental Health/Other Hospital	1%	1%	<1%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	3%
Other	13%	11%	10%	2%	2%	2%	4%	1%	4%
Boarding House	NA	NA	NA	2%	2%	5%	1%	1%	3%
Hotel/Motel	NA	NA	NA	2%	1%	3%	1%	1%	2%
Transitional Housing	3%	3%	1%	0%	1%	1%	<1%	1%	<1%

[a]Foster home, halfway house, or nursing home.

Table 15:
Health Insurance Coverage of Homeless Youth, Adults, and Elders

Health Insurance	Youth 2001 (N=384)	Adults 2001 (N=3,060)	Elderly 2001 (N=367)	Youth 2000 (N=269)	Adults 2000 (N=1,892)	Elderly 2000 (N=176)	Youth 1999 (N=181)	Adults 1999 (N=1,188)	Elderly 1999 (N=159)
No Health Insurance	39%	30%	22%	38%	32%	21%	40%	27%	19%
Medicaid/Mass Health	58%	61%	59%	50%	55%	53%	50%	57%	53%
Private Plan	1%	3%	6%	8%	5%	7%	7%	6%	6%
Medicare	1%	2%	9%	1%	3%	13%	2%	6%	16%
VA	<1%	2%	3%	0%	3%	5%	0%	2%	6%
HMO	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%

Table 16: Special Needs Assessments	% of records with special needs			% of total sample		
	Youth 2001 (N=291)	Adults 2001 (N=3,484)	Elderly 2001 (N=434)	Youth 2001 (N=959)	Adults 2001 (N=7,596)	Elderly 2001 (N=1,061)
Number of Special Needs						
One Special Need	90%	78%	79%	27%	36%	32%
Two Special Needs	8%	15%	15%	3%	7%	6%
Three or More Special Needs	2%	7%	6%	1%	3%	3%
Type of Special Needs *						
Alcohol	38%	56%	45%	11%	25%	21%
Mental Health	28%	20%	27%	8%	9%	13%
Drugs	17%	22%	10%	5%	10%	4%
Medical	10%	16%	30%	3%	7%	14%
PTSD	0%	3%	2%	0%	1%	1%
Hearing, Visual, Speech	5%	4%	7%	2%	2%	3%
Cognitive, Developmental, Learning, Alzheimers	7%	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%
HIV/AIDS	1%	1%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%

* More than 1 response possible

Table 17:
Income by Category of Homeless Youth, Adults, and Elders at Shelter Entry[5]

Income Category	Youth 2001 (N=959)	Adults 2001 (N=7,735)	Elderly 2001 (N=922)	
Employment[a]	28%	27%	19%	
Public Assistance[b]	25%	26%	35%	
Employ & Public Asst.	1%	1%	2%	**Data cannot be compared to previous years as data were collected in different formats**
No Formal Income[c]	NA	NA	NA	
Income not reported	44%	45%	43%	
Other[d]	1%	2%	2%	

[a]Wages,
[b]TANF, Food Stamps, SSI/SSDI, unemployment
[c]Child support/alimony, retirement, veterans pension

[5] For the analysis in Table 17, each individual providing income information was grouped into one of five income categories. As such, those with multiple sources were counted only once, as compared to Table 18, where more than one income source was reported.

Table 18:
Income Sources and Amounts of Homeless Youth, Adults, and Elders with Reported Income at Shelter Entry

Income	Youth 2001 (N=537)	Adults 2001 (N=4,292)	Elderly 2001 (N=530)	Youth 2000 (N=132)	Adults 2000 (N=1,297)	Elderly 2000 (N=212)	Youth 1999 (N=151)	Adults 1999 (N=1,443)	Elderly 1999 (N=219)
Income Source[a]									
Employment Income	53%	51%	36%	55%	45%	24%	62%	52%	22%
SS/SSI/SSDI	32%	37%	52%	30%	43%	65%	26%	44%	72%
Food Stamps	23%	15%	8%	17%	7%	4%	18%	9%	5%
Other Public Benefits[b]	7%	9%	11%	13%	9%	11%	6%	12%	16%
TAFDC	6%	2%	2%	7%	2%	<1%	7%	2%	0%
Other Private Income[c]	3%	2%	4%	0%	1%	7%	7%	3%	3%
Ave. Monthly Amount									
Employment Income	$1097 ns	$1100 ns	$1139 ns	$797	$1051*	$844	$760	$992	$876
SS/SSI/SSDI	$563*	$590 ns	$608*	$539	$576	$584	$491	$563	$586
Food Stamps	$173*	$147 ns	$113*	$134	$110	$92	$110	$97	$101
Other Public Benefits[b]	$434 ns	$505 ns	$617 ns	$328	$388	$419	$264	$330	$359
TAFDC	$454 ns	$440 ns	$455 ns	$284	$411	$96	$400	$328	NA
Other Private Income[c]	$499 ns	$394 ns	$555 ns	NA	$452	$570	NA	$435	$579

[a]More than one response possible.
[b]Earned Income Tax Credit (A), refugee assistance (A), veterans administration disability (A), veterans pension, workers' compensation (A), unemployment, general assistance, rent supplements (A), WIC (A), and alimony/child support.
[c]Retirement, investments (A), savings (A), private disability insurance (A), and other pension (A).
(A)= Information was only provided in the old ANCHoR system.

* Statistically significant difference among age groups in each year p<.01
ns: Statistically non significant

Comparative Highlights: Geographic comparisons between those served in Boston and the remainder of the state in 2001

Demographic Characteristics (p.17)

- Homeless shelter users in Boston in 2001 as compared to the remainder of the state were more likely to be:
  - female,
  - non-white,
  - older,
  - single and slightly less likely to be divorced,
  - veterans
- Except for an increase in high school graduation/GED, there were no notable changes among homeless shelter users in Boston in 2001 when compared to their counterparts in 2000.

Living Situation Prior to Shelter Entry (p.18)

- In 2001, homeless shelter users in Boston were less likely to have moved from another shelter to their current shelter, and more likely to have stayed on the streets or doubled up than their counterparts in other parts of the state.
- During 2001, proportionately fewer homeless shelter users in Boston moved to their current shelter coming from a different shelter, doubled up or a substance abuse treatment facility, and more had stayed in the streets than in prior years.

Health Insurance Coverage (p.18)

- There were no notable differences in type of health insurance coverage between the two regions in 2001.
- In 2001, slightly more individuals in Boston reported no health insurance coverage.

Special Needs Assessment (p.19)

- Homeless individuals in Boston were more likely to have more than one disability.
- Homeless individuals in Boston were more likely to have alcohol and drug problems, and/or a medical problem.

Income Assessments (p.20)

- Individual shelter users in Boston reported employment to a higher degree than those not residing in Boston during 2001
- Proportionately substantially fewer individual shelter users in Boston had access to food stamps.

Table 19:
Demographic Characteristics of Homeless Individuals by Region

	Individuals Boston 2001 (N=7,151)	Individuals Other Parts of the State, 2001 (N=4,022)	Individuals Boston 2000 (N=4,777)	Individuals Boston 1999 (N=3,755)
Gender	(N=6,805)	(N=3,954)	(N=4,738)	(N=3,728)
Male	78%	80%	76%	69%
Female	22%	20%	24%	31%
Race	(N=5,821)	(N=3,5211)	(N=3,836)	(N=3,469)
White	44%	64%	48%	47%
African American	34%	17%	36%	37%
Latino	16%	11%	12%	12%
Other	3%	6%	2%	3%
Multiracial	NA	NA	1%	1%
Native American	1%	1%	1%	1%
Asian	1%	1%	1%	<1%
Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Age	(N=5,734)	(N=3,884)	(N=4,756)	(N=3,736)
Under 18	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
18-24	9%	12%	9%	10%
25-34	18%	22%	19%	22%
35-44	32%	36%	34%	37%
45-54	29%	23%	26%	21%
54-64	10%	7%	9%	7%
65+	3%	2%	3%	3%
Average Age	42*	40*	42	40
Education	(N=3,487)	(N=1,247)	(N=965)	(N=1,206)
Grade school	7%	1%	10%	15%
Some high-school	20%	30%	33%	35%
HS grad./GED	46%	45%	32%	32%
Some college/AA	19%	16%	18%	14%
BS/BA	8%	9%	5%	4%
Grad. Degree	0%	0%	2%	2%
Marital Status	(N=5,324)	(N=3,256)	(N=3,622)	(N=3,139)
Single/Never Married	61%	59%	62%	64%
Divorced	20%	24%	19%	18%
Separated	9%	8%	10%	10%
Married	8%	7%	7%	7%
Widowed	2%	2%	2%	2%
Veterans	(N=7,151)	(N=4,022)	(N=4,777)	(N=3,755)
Yes	21%	14%	26%	17%

* Statistically significant difference p<.01

Table 20:
Residence of Homeless Individuals Prior to Entering Shelter by Region

Prior Residence	Individuals Boston 2001 (N=3,015)	Individuals Other Parts of the State 2001 (N=1,333)	Individuals Boston 2000 (N=1,651)	Individuals Boston 1999 (N=2,155)
Other Shelter	30%	43%	41%	39%
Rented Home	11%	14%	10%	14%
Homes of Relative/Friends	8%	4%	18%	13%
Detox/Substance Abuse Center	6%	7%	13%	17%
Street/Park/Car/Abandoned Bldg.	25%	10%	5%	4%
Owned Home	1%	4%	3%	1%
Jail/Prison/Detention Center	1%	2%	2%	1%
Supervised Living[a]	3%	<1%	1%	2%
Hotel/Motel	NA	NA	2%	1%
Other	11%	12%	2%	2%
Mental Health/Other Hospital	1%	2%	1%	2%
Boarding House	NA	NA	2%	1%
Transitional Housing	3%	3%	1%	1%

[a]Foster home, halfway house, or nursing home.

Table 21:
Health Insurance Coverage of Homeless Individuals by Region, 2000

Health Insurance	Individuals Boston 2001 (N=2,599)	Individuals Other Parts of the State 2001 (N=1,359)	Individuals Boston 2000 (N=692)	Individuals Boston 1999 (N=841)
No Health Insurance	30%	31%	22%	26%
Medicaid/Mass Health	61%	60%	62%	55%
Private Plan	4%	3%	7%	6%
Medicare	3%	3%	5%	8%
VA	1%	3%	2%	3%
HMO	1%	1%	2%	2%

Table 22: Special Needs Assessments of Homeless Men and Women	% of records with special needs		% of total sample	
	Boston 2001	Other Parts of the State 2001	Boston 2001	Other Parts of the State 2001
Number of Special Needs	(N=3,041)	(N=1,226)	(N=7,151)	(N=4,022)
One Special Need	74%	91%	32%	28%
Two Special Needs	17%	6%	7%	2%
Three or More Special Needs	9%	3%	4%	1%
Type of Special Needs *				
Alcohol	58%	44%	24%	13%
Mental Health	21%	20%	9%	6%
Drugs	25%	10%	10%	3%
Medical	18%	14%	8%	4%
PTSD	3%	1%	1%	<1%
Hearing, Visual, Speech	5%	3%	2%	1%
Cognitive, Developmental, Learning, Alzheimer	2%	2%	1%	1%
HIV/AIDS	1%	1%	<1%	<1%

* More than 1 response possible

Table 23:
Income by Category of Homeless Individuals at Shelter Entry by Region[6]

Income Category	Individuals Boston 2001 (N=7,151)	Individuals Other Parts of the State 2001 (N=4,022)	
Employment[a]	28%	20%	
Public Assistance[b]	22%	30%	
Employment and Public Assistance	1%	1%	
No Formal Income[c]	NA	NA	**Data cannot be compared to previous years as data were collected in different formats**
No income reported	48%	47%	
Other[d]	1%	1%	

[a]Wages,
[b]TANF, Food Stamps, SSI/SSDI, unemployment
[c]Child support/alimony, retirement, veterans pension

Table 24:
Income Sources and Amounts of Homeless Individuals with Reported Income at Shelter Entry by Region

Income	Individuals Boston 2001 (N=3,788)	Individuals Other Parts of the State 2001 (N=2,664)	Individuals Boston 2000 (N=1,445)	Individuals Boston1999 (N=1,964)
Income Source[a]				
Employment Income	55%	33%	45%	45%
SS/SSI/SSDI	32%	36%	43%	39%
Food Stamps	5%	23%	9%	6%
Other Public Benefits[b]	7%	9%	8%	8%
TAFDC	2%	3%	2%	2%
Other Private Income[c]	2%	3%	2%	2%
Average Monthly Amount				
Employment Income	$1145**	$1045**	$1,022	$967
SS/SSI/SSDI	$589 ns	$585 ns	$553	$550
Food Stamps	$143 ns	$155 ns	$109	$105
Other Public Benefits[b]	$586**	$412**	$393	$364
TAFDC	$433 ns	$452 ns	$325	$311
Other Private Income[c]	$434 ns	$420 ns	$638	$727

[a]More than one response possible.
[b]Earned Income Tax Credit (A), refugee assistance (A), veterans administration disability (A), veterans pension, workers' compensation (A), unemployment, general assistance, rent supplements (A), WIC (A), and alimony/child support.
[c]Retirement, investments (A), savings (A), private disability insurance (A), and other pension (A).
(A)= Information was only provided in the old ANCHoR system.

*Statistically significant difference between regions p<.01
**Statistically significant difference between regions p<.001
ns: Statistically non significant

[6] For the analysis in Table 23, each individual providing income information was grouped into one of five income categories. As such, those with multiple sources were counted only once, as compared to Table 24, where more than one income source was reported.

Appendix: Individual Emergency Shelters Contributing Records

Agencies Providing Records	(N=11,173)
Boston Rescue Mission/Kingston House	5%
Homeless Services/Boston Public Health Commission[7]	26%
Housing Assistance Corporation - Individual	5%
Jeremiah's Inn	1%
MainSpring Coalition for the Homeless, Inc.	8%
Massachusetts Veterans Inc.	2%
New England Shelter for Homeless Veterans	12%
Open Pantry Community Services	1%
Pine Street Inn	13%
Quincy Interfaith Sheltering Coalition	7%
Salvation Army Cambridge	6%
ServiceNet- Hampshire County Programs	1%
Shattuck Shelter	7%
Shelter, Inc.	1%
United Homes	1%
Worcester PIP (People In Peril) Shelter, Inc.	5%
Total Count	100%*

* Percents may not total 100 due to rounding

[7] The percentage of the total for Boston Public Health Commission's three emergency shelter programs was estimated based upon the total of the number of individuals served and weighted appropriately for those participating in the random sampling process.

Edmund Beard, Director
Sandra Blanchette, Assistant Director

Senior Fellows
Albert Cardarelli
Charles Cnudde
Louis C. DiNatale
Phyllis Freeman
Donna Haig Friedman
Ann Froines
Arthur A. Goldsmith
Mary K. Grant
Oscar Gutierrez
Carol Hardy-Fanta
Herman Hemingway
Jemadari Kamara
Robert Moran
Padraig O'Malley
Elizabeth A. Sherman
Mary Stevenson
Michael Stone
Carole Upshur
Elaine Werby
Ajume Wingo

Visiting Fellows
Randy Albelda
Nigel Hamilton
Joseph McDonough
Leonard Robinson
Regina Rodriguez-Mitchell

The John W. McCormack Institute of Public Affairs
University of Massachusetts Boston
100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125-3393
Tel: 617 287-5550
Fax: 617 287-5544
Email: mccormack.institute@umb.edu
Website: www.mccormack.umb.edu

The John W. McCormack Institute of Public Affairs
University of Massachusetts Boston
100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125-3393
Tel: 617 287-5550
Fax: 617 287-5544
Email: mccormack.institute@umb.edu
Website: www.mccormack.umb.edu

UMASS BOSTON